

in Collectivism behind him, at one time toyed with a national programme which, in its emphasis on the public ownership of the land, showed plainly the influence of Henry George

Henry George influenced the mind of the workman, very deeply it was a sure instinct that took John Ruskin to meet him, when he landed in England in 1882 George affected that mind far more deeply than did Marx, who, like Lenin after him, worked, unknown, in London, and died there, unknown, in 1883 But a more powerful influence than that of any revolutionary was arising out of the realisation of how the vast majority of the citizens of the richest city and country in the then world were actually living Pictures like that in *Darkest England* or *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* might be dismissed as sentimental and exaggerated, but the results of the great and thoroughly scientific enquiry into the Metropolis undertaken by Charles Booth in 1886 could not be so dismissed His demonstration, by statistical measurements based on a most thorough scrutiny, that in London no less than thirty per cent of the population were living below the poverty line, administered a most painful shock to optimists and pessimists alike Poverty, degraded and degrading, and poverty in "widest commonalty spread" was suddenly realised, as an appalling fact Hard upon this followed the great London Dock Strike of 1889 Revolt had stirred, first, among some of the weakest, worst-paid, and least organised workers The fiery

eloquence of
Mrs Besant put heart into the match-girls
their heroic
example, and its amazing success, fired the
dockers. The
1889 strike is a turning-point, not only in
the history
of Trade Unionism, whose centre of gravity
it shifted
from the skilled craftsman to what the
Americans call
"common labour", it is a turning-point in
social and
economic history. Public opinion,
almost for the first
time, was definitely and declaredly with the
stokers, and